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PP RUEHIK RUEHLN RUEHPOD RUEHSK RUEHVK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHMO #0004/01 0010733  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 010733Z JAN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1415  
INFO RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 000004

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [OREP](#) [PINR](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: RUSSIAN ANALYSTS COMPLAIN U.S. HAS BETRAYED RUSSIA'S TRUST  
- MEETING WITH CODEL TAUSCHER

1. (SBU) Summary: A roundtable of Russian analysts described -- often in emotional terms -- for visiting Representatives Ellen Taushcer, Doug Lamborn, Rick Larsen, and Loretta Sanchez, the deep displeasure with which many Russians view the U.S. government. They blamed much of this on America's failure to live up to expectations for a genuine post-Cold War partnership through actions such as continued NATO enlargement and lecturing Russia on governance and human rights. The analysts argued that even if Russia had an inaccurate perception of the current state of affairs, it was important for the U.S. to understand how Russians "perceived things." They accused the U.S. of "pushing" NATO enlargement for undefined political goals, and warned that Russia would be more defensive about Ukraine entering the alliance than Georgia. The analysts presented a contrast between Putin, who wanted to engage with the U.S., and Medvedev, who did not believe this was important. Finally, the analysts posited that smaller nuclear stockpiles in the future would complicate arms control, and differed on the importance of arms control at a time when the threat of war between Russia and NATO was minimal. End summary.

U.S. Indifference toward Russia  
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2. (SBU) During a December 15 luncheon hosted by the DATT, a panel of senior Russian security analysts told Representatives Ellen Taushcer (D-CA), Doug Lamborn (R-CO), Rick Larsen (D-WA), and Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), that many Russians lacked trust in the U.S., which was perceived to be indifferent, or even hostile, to Russian interests. The analysts, Aleksandr Belkin of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, Aleksandr Golts, Deputy Editor of Yezhenedelnyy Journal, Sergey Oznobischev of the Institute of Strategic Assessments, and Ivan Safranchuk of the Center for Defense Information, painted a gloomy picture of bilateral relations that they blamed largely upon the U.S.'s failure to treat Russia as a partner.

3. (SBU) Belkin contrasted contemporary Moscow, where speaking earnestly of cooperating with the U.S. meant that you were either "crazy or a traitor," with the 1990s, when there existed real trust and "we were full of hope" for the future. He warned the U.S. not to simply focus on the opinions of the Russian leadership, explaining that the mistrust of the U.S. had gone deeper into the populace and become ingrained in the "Russian soul." Belkin asked how it would be possible to convince Russians that the U.S. cared for more than its parochial interests when bilateral relations were at their lowest level. The DATT pointed out that the GOR, through its control of television, the nation's main source of information, was partly responsible for the current shape of public opinion toward the U.S.

A Matter of Perception  
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4. (SBU) The analysts agreed that Russian behavior on the world stage was often a reaction to how Russia perceived its treatment by the U.S. Belkin posited that if Russia was called a "rogue state" often enough, it was bound to behave like one. Oznobischev raised

the oft-heard objection to the U.S. pushing NATO enlargement without taking Russian security concerns into account, and complained that "nothing substantial" was done in the way of NATO-Russia cooperation apart from some coordination on Afghanistan. He advised that in a partnership, one partner should think about how the other "perceived things." Cooperation needed to be sincere, and not just an attempt to "use Russia." Rep. Larsen responded that if the U.S. did not adopt policies that Russia agreed with, Russians appeared to believe that the U.S. did not think "Russia mattered," which was inaccurate.

15. (SBU) Golts thought that what lay at the crux of Russia's poor opinion of the U.S. was Washington's penchant to lecture Moscow on governance. "We are building a democracy in our way and don't want foreign interference," he complained. The fact that the U.S. failed to live up to its own, "supposed high standards on human rights" in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantanamo, made this especially galling for Russians. He maintained that the war in Iraq played a large part in souring Putin on wanting to be a "member of the club" of forward-leaning countries by demonstrating that if a country had enough power it could do what it wanted and ignore international opinion.

The U.S. is "Pushing" NATO Enlargement  
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16. (SBU) The assembled analysts questioned what was driving NATO enlargement. Golts thought that while the initial round of enlargement fulfilled the goal of bringing in key Central European states, little was brought to the alliance by Bulgaria and Romania. He cautioned that adding Ukraine would present a country that lacked domestic consensus on joining NATO, while Georgia would bring in a

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country in conflict with its neighbors. Golts charged that the U.S. seemed willing to lower NATO standards for political purposes that remained unclear.

17. (SBU) The analysts agreed that it appeared Ukraine and Georgia were being "pushed" by the U.S. toward NATO membership. They offered as evidence the U.S. plan to get Ukraine and Georgia into the alliance without MAP after NATO members rejected extending it at the Bucharest summit. Rep. Tauscher responded that it seemed curious that the U.S. was criticized for pursuing its objectives within NATO when the fact that it could not force consensus on its allies demonstrated that the alliance remained democratic. Rep. Larsen reminded the analysts that countries were eager to join NATO, and the U.S. did not have to "force" anyone in.

Ukraine is More Important than Georgia  
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18. (SBU) Belkin stressed to the Representatives that while the "bitter divorce" between Russia and Georgia might be "emotional and painful" for Russians because of the countries' historical association, it was not as important to Russians as Ukraine. He worried that American policymakers did not understand the cultural links that made Ukraine so crucial for Russians, mentioning that two-thirds of his family lived in Ukraine and they "don't care about NATO." The U.S. pushing policies such as NATO membership for Ukraine only helped the "America haters come to power" in Russia and gave legitimacy to the hardliners' vision of "fortress Russia."

Putin and Medvedev Differ on the U.S.  
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19. (SBU) Ivan Safranchuk argued that there existed two schools of thought on Russian relations with the U.S.: those, like Putin, who believe it was necessary to engage with the U.S., and those, like Medvedev, who did not see a need to do so. The "engagers" believed that the U.S. was "not going to go away" so Russia "needed to deal with it." They used strategic arms control as a test: if Russia could deal with the U.S. on arms control, then perhaps we could move forward on other issues. The "disengagers" did not want confrontation with the U.S., but neither did they see a need to work with it. They preferred to seek alternative spaces where the U.S.

could be kept at a distance, which explained Russian interest in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Central Asia, as well as the still evolving RIC (Russia-India-China) and BRIC (Brazil-Russia-India-China) groupings.

#### Arms Control

¶10. (SBU) Turning to arms control, Safranchuk explained that the future was complicated by Russian and U.S. strategies that would be based upon lower numbers of warheads. Diminishing numbers would make the arsenals "more asymmetrical," which would require not only counting warhead but also the capabilities of delivery platforms. He argued that arms control would become more important as the number of warheads dropped and strategic doctrine would depend more upon "risky nuclear policies" to overcome counter-measures such as missile defense.

¶11. (SBU) Safranchuk thought that both Russia and the U.S. were looking toward more nontraditional forms of arms control, but each country had a different vision for the future. Russia wanted a treaty on strategic armaments, including delivery systems, and not just warheads, whereas the U.S. wanted an inclusive treaty on nuclear warheads that included tactical nuclear weapons.

¶12. (SBU) Golts maintained that the Russian focus on strategic issues was a method to keep the U.S. occupied "counting warheads" rather than interfering in Russian affairs. He thought that ratification of the CFE was worthwhile, but doubted that it was crucial when there was no threat of war between Russia and NATO. Golts pointed out that the Russian military clearly did not see a threat from NATO, otherwise it would not be planning extensive reforms that moved the armed forces away from its traditional orientation to fight a large-scale European war.

¶13. (U) The delegation did not clear this cable.

BEYRLE